

# 1998–99 CATS ASSESSMENT

## Open-Response Item Scoring Worksheet

### Grade 7—Reading

The **academic expectation** addressed by “The Burning of Washington” is

1.2 Students make sense of the variety of materials they read.

The **core content** assessed by this item includes

- Describe characters, setting, conflict and resolution, theme, and point-of-view.
- Identify supporting details and identify their importance in a passage.
- Reflect on and evaluate what is read.

#### The Burning of Washington

In this excerpt, the author describes Dolley Madison’s actions before the British burned Washington, D.C.

- Identify **two** character traits of Mrs. Madison.
- Describe the actions that illustrate her character traits.

Use details from the article to support your answer.



# SCORING GUIDE

## Grade 7 Reading

Score	Description
4	Student identifies two character traits of Mrs. Madison and clearly describes actions that illustrate these character traits. Response includes details from the article.
3	Student identifies two character traits of Mrs. Madison and generally describes actions that illustrate these character traits. Response lacks some details.
2	Student identifies two character traits of Mrs. Madison and gives a limited description of how her actions illustrate these character traits. <b>OR</b> Student identifies one character trait of Mrs. Madison and clearly describes actions that illustrate this character trait.
1	Student response is minimal (e.g., student identifies one or two character traits without describing actions that illustrate it/them or student describes Mrs. Madison as a person without mentioning character traits).
0	Response is totally incorrect or irrelevant.
Blank	No response.

### Mrs. Madison's character traits:

- loyal to the people of Washington, patriotic
- dignified, determined, proud, calm and cool
- courageous, calm and cool
- smart, patriotic, calm and cool
- considerate, calm and cool
- loyal to her husband, considerate
- confident, brave, devoted

### Mrs. Madison's actions:

- saved government papers by sending ahead
- decided to evacuate White House with dignity and everything in order
- wrote letter to sister while waiting for husband
- broke frame to save George Washington portrait (respect for former presidents)
- finished letter to sister before leaving
- took the papers to avoid embarrassment for her husband
- all of the above actions illustrate these traits



## READING PASSAGE

### Grade 7

*Our nation's capital was burned in the War of 1812. Read the excerpt below to find out what happened before and during that day in Washington, D.C. Then answer the questions that follow.*

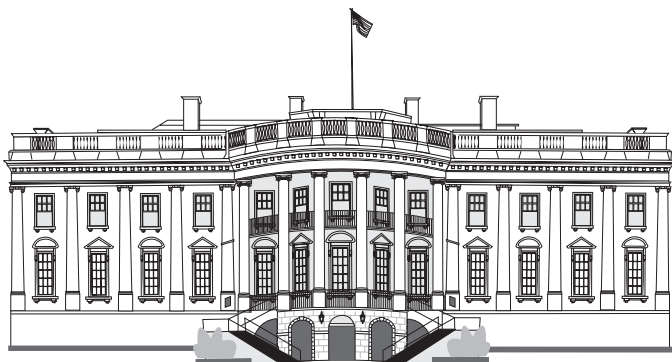
## *The Burning of Washington*

Early in the war, the United States enjoyed success at sea, but suffered bitter defeats on land. The initial sea battles were fought off the New England coast and in the Great Lakes. The splendid American frigate *Constitution* opened the fighting by sinking a mighty British warship. Later the *Constitution* earned the nickname Old Ironsides because British cannonballs thudded harmlessly off her copper-sheathed sides. On land, however, American attacks on Canada were driven back. One American army unit captured Toronto (then called York), but was quickly driven out of the city. Before they retreated, American troops set fire to a few of Toronto's public buildings. Because the Americans had left portions of Toronto in flames, the British army sought revenge.

The war took a new direction in 1814 when Napoleon was defeated in Europe. This enabled Great Britain to move powerful armies to the New World. One of those armies, fresh from Europe, defeated the Americans at Bladensburg and now stood poised to march into Washington.

In Washington the mood shifted from one of confidence to panic. Streams of civilians and defeated militiamen choked the streets. One Washingtonian wrote a letter describing

the frenzy in the capital: "The distress here and in Georgetown is beyond any description. Women and children running in every direction. . . . If the force of the enemy is as large as stated this city will fall. . . . All is confusion as you may easily imagine. . . . Stages, hacks, carts, or wagons cannot be procured for love or money. They are all pressed for the military. I have just returned from



taking a load of children eight miles out of town, and the whole distance the road was filled with women and children. Indeed I never saw so much distress in my life as today. . . . I am fearful that by twelve o'clock tomorrow this city will not be ours."

At the White House, Dolley Madison waited anxiously for her husband, the president, to return. He had ridden off early in the morning to visit the fighting front. To ease the tension of her wait, Mrs. Madison wrote a letter to her sister: "Will you believe it, we have had a battle near Bladensburg, and I am still here within the sound of



## READING PASSAGE

### Grade 7

the cannon! Mr. Madison comes not. May God protect him.”

While the president’s wife wrote, two dust-covered messengers galloped up to the White House and banged on the front door. One of the messengers cried, “Clear out, clear out! The general has ordered a retreat.”

A lesser person, fearing capture by the enemy, would have fled in panic. But Mrs. Madison was a cool, confident woman. She intended to evacuate Washington, but she would leave with dignity and only when she was certain that her house was in order.



First, many of Mr. Madison’s government papers had to be taken with her. It would be embarrassing for the president’s documents to fall into the hands of the British. And, most important of all, she was determined to protect what she believed to be the prized possession in the White House—the marvelous portrait of George Washington that hung in the large drawing room.

The portrait showed the first president standing proudly with his sword at his side. It had been painted by Gilbert Stuart, one of America’s most accomplished artists. Dolley Madison told her servants to take the painting down, box it up, and put it in the wagon waiting to take her to safety. The servants discovered that the frame was bolted to the wall. So Mrs. Madison ordered them to break the frame. Just before she fled the White House, the First Lady finished her letter: “[I placed] the precious portrait in the hands of some gentlemen from New York for safekeeping. And now, dear sister, I must leave this house, or the army will make me a prisoner in it. . . . When I shall again write you or where I shall be tomorrow, I cannot tell!”

A half hour after Mrs. Madison’s wagon carried her away, the president and Attorney General Richard Rush rode up to the White House. They rested for an hour, then decided they, too, must leave Washington. No doubt the president’s spirits were devastated upon leaving his capital to the enemy. But with the British at the city’s gates he was as powerless to defend the capital as any other citizen. According to one witness, Mr. Madison “cooly



## READING PASSAGE

### Grade 7

mounted his horse” and rode off with his party to the Potomac River crossing.

At 6:00 P.M. on August 24, 1814, the British entered Washington, D.C. They found the city streets deserted. Those Washingtonians who had not escaped huddled in their homes.

Naval admiral Sir George Cockburn served as overall commander of the British troops. Witnesses said he took a fiendish delight in igniting some of the capital’s most important buildings. The British government later claimed it was justified in setting the fires because Americans had burned several government buildings in Toronto two years earlier. But at least one British officer thought the burning of Washington was a barbaric act.



# ANNOTATED STUDENT RESPONSE

## Grade 7 Reading

### Sample 4-Point Response of Student Work

#### Student Response

The actions Mrs. Madison took were in consideration of others and not herself. She showed integrity and courage. She knew how embarrassing it would be for her husband's, the president's, government papers to be discovered by the British, so she took time to gather them and take them with her. Then, she was determined to take the picture of George Washington (what she believed to be the prized possession of the White House) with her. It would not come off the wall, the servants told her, but she told them to break the frame because she was very determined to take it. So they did.

This may not seem like much, but it is, because it took great courage from this woman to stay behind and get certain things before she left. Many people fled at the beginning and if things were then like they are now the first lady could have been the second person out of Washington, the first of course, being the president. But instead of hurrying off, Mrs. Madison refused to leave until her household was taken care. This shows great integrity, courage, and definitely kindness!



Student identifies two character traits of Mrs. Madison.



Student gives an in-depth description of actions from the excerpt that illustrate one trait (i.e., integrity).



Student gives a clear description of actions from the excerpt that illustrate another trait (i.e., courage).

Overall, student demonstrates a strong ability to comprehend an informational passage, evaluate what is read, and select supporting details.



# ANNOTATED STUDENT RESPONSE

## Grade 7 Reading

### Sample 4-Point Response of Student Work

#### Student Response

In the excerpt, the author described Mrs. Madison's actions when the British were burning Washington so that it revealed her personality. The first action was to be cool and calm when she left Washington. She wanted to leave in dignity and she wanted to leave her house in order. This showed that she was very dignified and very calm under pressure.

Second, she took Mr. Madison's important papers. She knew it would be embarrassing for Mr. Madison if the papers fell into the hand of the British. This showed that she was able to think rationally while her belongings and life was in danger.

Third, Mrs. Madison protected what she believed was the most important possession of the White House: the painting of George Washington. She even had to break the frame in order to take it. This proved she thought toward the future. She probably thought that that painting would be treasured later on.

These are the ways I believe that the author showed Mrs. Madison's personality through her actions when the British were burning Washington.

Student identifies a character trait of Mrs. Madison (i.e., dignity) and gives a general description of how her actions illustrate this trait based on the excerpt.

Student identifies another character trait of Mrs. Madison (i.e., rational) and gives a clear description of how her actions illustrate this trait based on the excerpt.

Student identifies a third character trait of Mrs. Madison (i.e., forward thinking) and gives a clear description of how her actions illustrate this trait based on the excerpt.

Overall, the student demonstrates a strong ability to comprehend an informational passage, evaluate what is read, and select supporting details.



# ANNOTATED STUDENT RESPONSE

## Grade 7 Reading

### Sample 3-Point Response of Student Work

#### Student Response

Mrs. Madison was the kind of person that was loving and caring. She's also very protective to this country. Before she left she took the documents because she was afraid that it would fall into the British's hands. She also took the picture of General Washington down so it wouldn't be burnt. She didn't want to leave the White House because her husband was missing, but she followed her husband's order to evacuate the White House.



Student identifies at least two character traits of Mrs. Madison (e.g., caring, protective) and generally describes actions that illustrate one of these character traits (i.e., protective); description lacks details.

Overall, student demonstrates some ability to comprehend an informational passage, evaluate what is read, and select supporting details.





# ANNOTATED STUDENT RESPONSE

## Grade 7 Reading

### Sample 2-Point Response of Student Work

#### Student Response

Mrs. Madison said she would only leave Washington with dignity. She made sure to get all of the presidents documents because she thought it would be embarrassing to let them fall into British hands. She took the picture of her husband.

I think all this shows she is confident and a strong woman. She had worked hard for what she had and didn't want to leave it.

← Student identifies at least two character traits of Mrs. Madison (e.g., dignified, confident) and gives a limited description of how her actions illustrate these character traits.

← Overall, the student demonstrates limited ability to comprehend an informational passage, evaluate what is read, and select supporting details.

### Sample 1-Point Response of Student Work

#### Student Response

The question asks to explain how Mrs. Madisons actions reveled what kind of pesron that she was.

Mrs. Madisons actions revealed that she was a calm and cool person through the burning of Washington, D.C.

← Student identifies character traits of Mrs. Madison without describing actions that illustrate them.

Overall, the student demonstrates minimal ability to comprehend an informational passage, evaluate what is read, and select supporting details.



# INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

## Grade 7 Reading

The open-response item, “**The Burning of Washington**” was designed to assess students’ ability to (1) reflect on and evaluate what is read and (2) identify supporting details and identify their importance in a passage. The instructional strategies below present ideas for helping students develop and master these skills.

Informational passages such as “The Burning of Washington” can be integrated across the curriculum and used to encourage students to critically analyze and effectively interpret text. Use informational selections from scientific journals, cultural and news magazines, newspapers, or the Internet to help students develop the critical thinking skills needed to analyze and interpret text. Review with students a variety of strategies that can be used to analyze, synthesize, organize, and compare information. Some strategies you may want to discuss are:

**Content Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (Content DR-TA)** – This strategy gives students the opportunity to begin to organize prior knowledge and new knowledge learned during the literacy event (Stauffer, 1969, 1976).

**K-W-L Plus Worksheet** - A worksheet students fill out before, during, and after a reading selection, lesson, or unit of study. *K* represents what the student already *knows*; *W* represents what the student *wants to know*; and *L* represents what they *learned*. The “Plus” refers to the mapping activity students complete after they have filled in the worksheet (Carr & Ogle, 1987).

**Semantic Maps** – A graphic representation of general or specific terms used to connect information to related topics. This strategy can be used before reading a text selection or a unit to activate student’s background knowledge or after reading to summarize and integrate ideas.

**Character Maps** – A graphic representation that describes character traits and actions of a character from a narrative or an informational selection. This strategy can help students make the connections between a character’s actions and the character traits they possess.

Have students work individually, in pairs, in small groups, and/or as a class to complete any or all of the following activities:

Research a specific topic and analyze information from a variety of sources including magazines, newspapers or the Internet. Apply the information to real life, related topics, current events, or other genres.

Compare and contrast the differences between a narrative and an informational text selection. Create a comparison chart (2 columns) or a semantic map that visually represents the differences and similarities between the different text genres.

Create character maps of characters from narratives and informational passages. Identify one character’s actions that reveal his/her character traits. Write a description of the character explaining how the character’s actions reveal the character traits.

Take on the role of an historian or a biographer and research an historical, scientific, or mathematical person who has contributed to their field of study. Prepare an oral presentation for the class in the form of an obituary, a slide show, or “a day in the life” report. (This activity will encourage students to cross reference historical, scientific, or mathematical information with reading and writing skills.)